

The Leesburg Tree Commission met in regular session on Monday April 19, 1999 at 7:30 p.m. in the lower level meeting room, 25 West Market Street, Leesburg, VA. Members present were: Ms. Pritchard, Mr. Groothius, Mr. Hower, Mr. Zoldos, and Mr. Hicks. Staff was represented by Mr. Jay S. Banks and Susan DeJong.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the March 22 meeting were approved as amended.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Bruce Dewar and his wife Julie were introduced. They were attending the meeting to see about trees being planted on Memorial Drive.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Randolph Shoemaker, Director of Utilities for the Town of Leesburg was introduced. Mr. Shoemaker wanted to commend the Memorial Drive neighborhood for trying to get trees planted on Memorial Drive. However, it does leave the Utilities Department in a very awkward position in that there are over one hundred miles of sewer utilities and over one hundred miles of water utilities easements in the Town of Leesburg. There are probably a number of other people that would like to plant trees or landscape within the designated utility easements. This does occasionally lead to problems such as a citizen calls up with their sewer being backed up and an investigation turns out that ten years ago someone has planted a tree over top of the sewer line and now the roots are getting into the sanitary sewer clogging it up. The Utility easements are protected through the Town Ordinances. In the subdivision and land development ordinance a vegetation preservation and planting schedule that refers to ordinance required landscaping materials excludes trees in public easements. The Utility Department has no problem at all with landscaping a median within the Town with small shrubs, day lilies etc... However when you plant trees over top of sanitary sewer lines inevitably the roots will enter the joints of the pipe. In Memorial Drive in particular the line was put in over 40 years ago and is clay pipe with rubber jointed gaskets. There is a lot of that type of pipe in Town and there is a lot of root intrusion problems in Town from trees. There really is no way to avoid the roots from entering the sewer pipe. Water is a little bit different in that there is much less chance of root intrusion in a water main but there is a water main line along that street also. The problem that utilities encounter with this water system is that when they have a valve located in the line the packing on the valve leaks, roots seek water, wrap themselves around the valve and around the valve nuts. So that when there is a water main break they go out to put a valve wrench on the pipe and can't get to it.

This is one of the reasons behind not allowing tree plantings on the easements. The language within the sanitary sewer easement which is also an ordinance that's contained in the Design and Construction Standards Manual for new developments states the Town shall have the right to trim cut and remove trees in or near the easement being conveyed. The Town at its own expense shall restore as near as possible to the original condition all land and premises which were disturbed in any manner by the construction, operation, or maintenance of said sanitary sewer lines in pertinent

facilities, but shall not include the replacement of structures, trees and other facilities located within the easement. So the council is very clear on their position when they adopted these ordinances about not allowing trees on sanitary sewer easements.

Mr. Banks said that the Tree Commission had asked if the pipe was that old what are the chances of the pipe being moved (out of the median area) because of its age? But after Mr. Banks had discussions with the utility maintenance group he realized that that would be a major undertaking because of the laterals coming off the main. And there is a four foot diameter storm water line on the west side of Memorial Drive, so there would be no movement in that direction.

Mr. Zoldos asked if there was a replacement schedule for that line. Mr. Shoemaker answered that typically clay pipe has a very long life and there are a number of areas in Town that they have had to repair from it being broken or the soil around it being undermined. But they don't usually replace pipe unless there is a severe problem with it and more often than not they would do an insitu repair or a repair in place instead of excavating it.

Mr. Hicks asked if there could be trees planted in large planters that could be used.

Mr. Banks stated that something like that would weigh about 2000 pounds and that could still be a problem because of the weight on the sewer lines.

Mr. Zoldos asked what could be planted in the median.

Mr. Shoemaker replied that low growing shrubs would be permitted.

Mr. Zoldos then asked the Dewars to check with their neighbors and come back to the Commission with what they would like to see done with the median.

Mr. Hower suggested looking into a street tree easement where a municipally funded tree is put on private property.

Ms. Pritchard asked about the Street Tree Easement Document.

Mr. Banks explained the town Attorney has drawn up a draft of what it would take for this municipality to put a tree on private property. The easement would have to be dedicated to the town for a particular area and then that would become town property. The town would have the responsibility of that tree and any damage the tree causes is then the Town's responsibility. This draft will be incorporated into the town plan eventually.

Ms. Pritchard asked for a motion that the Tree Commission go through the legislative process to get this street easement into the town code. Mr. Groothius made the motion, seconded by Mr. Hicks and approved by all.

Ms. Pritchard then brought up the \$5,000.00 tree planting project. Ms. Pritchard asked that the Commission think about where they want to plant the trees and what type of tree do they want. The entrance to Ida Lee Park, Harper Park, Ida Lee Park, Brandon Park and 2 trees at the plaza intersection of Edwards Ferry were suggestions as to where to put the trees. The variety of tree would be determined by the Tree Commission and Parks and Recreation. Mr. Hicks made a motion for the Town Arborist to find a proper location, execute an RFP and conclude with a purchase order for the purchase and installation of trees not to exceed \$5,000. Mr. Groothius seconded the motion and was approved by all.

Ms. Pritchard asked for an update on the Flower and Garden event. Mr. Banks explained that

the Tree Commission had booth # 21 on South King Street and that the 1,000 Cherry Bark Oak trees will be delivered on Friday to the Town Hall to be given to the public during the Flower and Garden Show. This species is native to the Piedmont region of Virginia, also west of Illinois, and is a bottom land species which means it will do well in wet sites. It is in the Red Oak family and grows very rapidly. Ms. Pritchard then went over the schedule as to what times volunteers would be at the booth.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Pritchard asked what the Commission thought of the Arbor Day Event this year. The consensus was that everything went very well and had a real “community feel” about it.

Mr. Banks reminded commissioners Ms. Pritchard, Ms. Whalley, Ms. Wall and Mr. Hicks that their intentions have to be communicated to the Council as to their desire to remain on the Tree Commission. Mr. Zoldos said to send a letter asking to be re-appointed (or not) to Ms. Barbara Markland.

Mr. Banks asked if there were any questions concerning the packet of material the Commissioners received.

Mr. Groothius asked if there was any way the tree topping practice in the Community could be stopped. Mr. Banks said no, and that one of the things that this points specifically to is how much this community needs education in proper arboricultural practices.

Mr. Hicks thanked Councilman Zoldos for his efforts in re-establishing the Tree Commission’s funding for next year and getting the budget restored.

Mr. Hower attended the Parks and Recreation meeting as a citizen of the Town of Leesburg to introduce Mr. Fred Fox to explain the Riparian Buffer Project on the Park property.

Mr. Hower stated that he heard the Bellwood Commons owners were asked if they wanted the trees back, they said “no”. Mr. Hower wondered if Bellwood Commons merchants were approached by citizens letting them know how beneficial trees would be if they were to plant trees there.

Mr. Zoldos thought that maybe he could ask staff to contact the owners to see if there has been a change of heart or if Mr. Hower would like the Commission to take this on as an assignment .

Mr. Hower then asked about the Catoctin Circle improvement project. Ms. Pritchard asked Mr. Hower and Mr. Banks to point out on the map which trees would be impacted as a result of this project.

Ms. Pritchard stated that she had not received any minutes from the Parks and Recreation and EAC meetings. Since Mr. Hower had attended this meeting she asked if there was anything the Tree Commission should know about. Mr. Hower didn't think so.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Jay S. Banks, Town Arborist

Susan C. DeJong, Recording Secretary